

YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

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Rural Killings Draw Focus to Mental Illness

Psychiatric care remains beyond the reach of ill people in rural China. **Page 4**



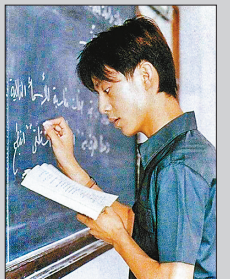
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10 Arrested for Poaching Panda, Selling Meat

BY WANG YAN

Police in Yunnan Province arrested 10 people for killing an adult female wild panda and selling its body parts, China's Central Television (CCTV) reported last Wednesday.

The incident occurred in the city of Shaotong, where local police were tipped off last December about the illegal sale of panda meat.

On December 31, local police seized 8.5 kilograms of suspected panda meat and a frozen carcass at the home of a buyer surnamed Wu. Further investigation found that the meat and bones were from a female giant panda, Shi Qin, director of technology for the Yunnan Forest Police, told CCTV.

Police found that the panda was killed

on December 4 by two brothers identified only by the surname Wang. The brothers told authorities that they accidentally killed the panda while they were hunting for a wild animal that killed several sheep on their farm.

CCTV said the panda was injured by the first shot but climbed to a tree to escape. The brothers fired again, killing the panda. Later that night, the two sold 35 kilograms of panda meat and four panda paws to a buyer surnamed Li for 4,800 yuan. Li hid them at home and sold the panda paws to one buyer and the meat to Wu. Wu later sold the meat to another three people.

Police found two thighbones, two

skull fragments, a gall bladder and two rifles at the brothers' farm. Police detained the brothers and eight other individuals involved in the sale of the panda, CCTV said.

Wildlife authorities estimate that fewer than 2,000 giant pandas remain. They are globally protected, and killing a panda or selling panda products is a serious crime. GoKunming.com said that those involved in poaching or attempting to profit from killing the panda could face up to 10 years in prison following new anti-poaching laws that came into effect last year.

Experts said they expect a harsh sentence due to panda's status as a national symbol of China. ■

CHINESE STOCK INDEXES

SSE (Shanghai)

Close	Change	YTD
4,592.42	▲ 83.13 (1.87%)	+40.03%

SZSE (Shenzhen)

Close	Change	YTD
15,872.53	▲ 535.45 (3.49%)	+44.64%

HSI (Hong Kong)

Close	Change	YTD
27,523.72	▼ 61.33 (0.22%)	+16.65%

Accurate to market close on May 21, 2015





Photo by hexun.com

Traditional Troupe Opens Peking Opera to Xicheng

BY WANG LINGXIAO

The more than 70-year-old Fenglei Peking Opera Troupe opened to common viewers on May 13 in the Banzhang Hutong of Xicheng district.

More than 50 opera lovers including pupils, teachers and local residents came to see the first performance.

Fenglei Peking Opera Troupe said it would host one to two performances

each month starting from its trial location in Xicheng. Groups from schools, communities or other institutions can watch for free by reserving a seat 10 days in advance.

In addition to the performances, the troupe leader Song Yan will also introduce the history of Peking Opera. Visitors can enter a greenroom to touch the actors'

costumes and traditional props.

"We are the last traditional opera troupe in Beijing," Song said. "Opening up is the most direct way to let fans experience the history and tradition of Peking Opera."

The Xuanwumen area was called Xuannan during the Qing Dynasty. This region included the present-day Liulichang, Tiaoqiao and Dashilar.

Xuannan is the source of Peking Opera and many folk opera stages are preserved to this day. The Zhengyici Peking Opera Theater and the theaters in Huguang Guild Hall and Anhui Guild Hall are all cultural relics.

The local government renovated many hutong throughout Xicheng district to preserve historic Peking Opera stages. Cultural elements of Peking Opera, such as the biographies of famous actors and makeup reliefs, are used to decorate the public spaces. ■

(Wang Lingxiao is an intern at Beijing Today.)

University Holds Weight Loss Competition

BY DIAO DIAO

Young Chinese men and women are increasingly concerned with their physical appearance, and the short clothes of June and July make April and May a key season for weight loss.

Recently, the University of Chongqing made headlines by offering its students an incentive to slim down. The school promised gifts of iPads and mini refrigerators to students who shed the most weight.

For less ambitious contestants, the school offered 10 yuan per kilo lost to students who lost up to 2.5 kilograms.

Those who lost up to 5 kilograms could claim a 20 yuan per kilo reward. Students who shed more than 5 kilograms would be rewarded 40 yuan per kilo.

More than 400 participants joined the competition on May 17 and recorded their current weight. They will be weighed using the same scale next month for comparison.

The university also opened several QQ groups for participants.

To promote healthy weight loss, the university promised free breakfast vouchers for 5 yuan to students who show up for a morning run. Those who run for seven days can get a free box of milk.

Jiang Bo, vice president of school's sports, said the competition is intended to lead students toward a healthy lifestyle.

"Competitions with rewards are always attractive and effective. We hope that after the competition students can also keep the good habits they develop," Jiang said.

Countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Japan, Canada and Sweden have used similar competitions to encourage citizens to be aware of their health.

"Many people, especially girls, are always trying to diet to lose weight. But that approach is harmful to the body. Being active is the best way to keep slim," said Zhang Hongrui, a participant at Chongqing University.

"I hope it's not too late for Chinese people to be aware of the dangers of dieting and learn to live healthier – even if it's not to lose weight," he said. ■



Photo by cqcq.com

Lhasa Brings Basketball to Seat of the World

BY WANG YAN



Photo by SU Sport

The Tibetan Autonomous Region announced the formation of its first professional basketball team, the Lhasa Jingtu, last Tuesday.

The Huashang Morning Post reported that the team's home court, the Lhasa Cultural and Sports Center, is located 3,658 meters above sea level and is the world's high-

est basketball home court.

Xie Yuteng, an official from Tibet's sports bureau, told the *Huashang Morning Post* that the team would be a breakthrough for sports development in Tibet and will bring greater diversity to the region's leisure activities.

China's National Basketball League (NBL)

announced on Thursday that the 14-member Lhasa Jingtu will compete in its 2015 competition and will host its rivals at the Lhasa Cultural and Sports Center.

Experts say the home court's altitude will give the Tibetan team a significant advantage, as they will be accustomed to the thinner air of higher altitudes than visiting opponents.

Xie said the altitude would surely influence the competition, but only slightly. Two professional teams had games in Tibet last year and did fairly well, he said.

"Besides, our players will be recruited from all over the nation, so many of them will also need time to adapt," Xie said.

The NBL has not released detailed schedule. It is unknown how many games will be held in Lhasa. ■

(Wang Yan is an intern at Beijing Today.)

Apple Pay

Apple Eyes Partnership with Alibaba on Mobile Payment

BY YANG XIN

Apple CEO Tim Cook's annual visit to China had a dual purpose this year: aside from announcing a lofty environmental initiative to protect forests, Cook sought to partner with Alipay – an affiliate of thee-commerce giant Alibaba and China's largest payment service provider.

"Apple is actively negotiating with financial institutions to bring Apply Pay to Chinese consumers," Cook told Xinhua News Agency in a recent interview. "I'm very bullish on Apply Pay in China."

Apple Pay, which allows consumers using Apple devices to buy goods by holding the device up to readers installed by store merchants, launched in the US last September.

Cook's ambition is to be expected, though. China's booming economy, growing middle class and high saturation of smart-phone users is a ripe market for the Apple-branded contactless payment solution.

Apply Pay is currently only available in the US.

Analysts expect China to take over the Americas to become Apple's biggest

market. In the first three months of the year, for the first time, Apple sold more iPhones in China than in the US.

With millions of frequent users and a long-time relationship with the government, Alipay could help Apple get a foot in the door and deal with local regulatory agencies. Last October, the two giants had a secret meeting, after which Alibaba stated publicly that it was open to working with Apple on Apple Pay.

While Apple Pay in China could mean great rewards, the Chinese market bears a number of unique challenges for Apple.

Apple insider analyzed said that the most troublesome is UnionPay, China's state-owned credit and debit card operator. Reporters earlier this year claimed Apple was nearing an agreement with UnionPay, but forward progress stalled after talks broke down in February.

While Alibaba will no doubt be a key partner, a deal with UnionPay is needed for Apply Pay's entry into China, given that the bank is the only entity in China that handles inter-bank transfers, and which has the necessary NFC-enabled network to handle contactless payments. ■



Photo by 9T05Mac



Photo by theapplepips



Photo by WSJ



Photo by Strait Times

Zhejiang Man Spends 4 Years Proving Mother was Cremated

BY WANG LINGXIAO

It took eight trips to the funeral parlor over four years before a man in Zhuji, Zhejiang province could obtain the necessary documents to prove that his mother was dead and cremated.

"I took my residence booklet and a certificate from the village to the local civil affairs bureau, but they asked me to get a cremation certificate from the funeral parlor. When I came to the funeral parlor, I was asked to go back to my village for another certificate," said the man, surnamed He.

"Why does the government create such complex procedures to deal with common issues?" he said.

He's mother died in 2010. Before she perished, she paid 100 yuan to a rural social endowment insurance agency. According to law, when an insured person



Photo by CFP

dies before collecting their pension, the 100 yuan can be returned.

But to disburse the 100 yuan, the local government demanded a cremation certificate.

The problem was that none of He's family remembered where the cremation

certificate had gone. Staff at the funeral parlor said they needed a death certificate and the ID card of the deceased to reissue it. But after the woman's death, her ID card and residential information were canceled.

"I've been to the funeral parlor eight times, as well as the civil affairs bureau, and spent more than 1,000 yuan on transportation, but I still failed to get the certificate or get back my mom's 100 yuan insurance deposit," He said.

Workers at the local government of Anhua, Zhuji said on May 13 that they would simplify the procedure. "People who want to fetch a dead family's member's pension payment will only need proof of death from a local police station. This document will be enough for the civil affairs bureau will deal with it," said a spokesman for the city. ■

(Wang Lingxiao is an intern at Beijing Today.)

THE WEEK IN WEIRD

STRANGE HAPPENINGS ON THE CHINESE NEWS WIRE
BY SU DERUI

74-Year-Old Pledges Not to Extort Bystanders

A 74-year-old man surnamed Yan took a tumble in the Shenyang subway during the morning rush. Perhaps inspired by stories of bystanders refusing to help injured elders, he shouted to the crowd, "I have insurance, I'm not going to extort you!"

A woman surname Lu was the first to rush to his aid, offering her purse as a temporary pillow. Metro staff helped clear a path for emergency services, and Yan was taken to a nearby hospital on a stretcher.

(Tencent News)

Qingdao Traffic Warden Brains Jaywalker with a Hammer

Not every city has the kind of passive traffic wardens we have come to love in Beijing. On March 15, one traffic officer decided the best way to get an unruly female jaywalker back in line was to bludgeon her over the head with a hammer.

The woman was taken to the hospital after the attack.

A witness said the traffic warden attempted to stop the woman from crossing the intersection of Haian Lu and Hanzhou Lu during a red light. When the two began to argue, the traffic warden produced a hammer and bashed the woman over the head. She fell to the ground bleeding.

Rather than flee the scene, the traffic warden pointed to the woman as a warning to other would-be jaywalkers. She was later detained by the police.

(The Paper)

Man Sentenced to Real Prison for Smuggling Fake Guns

A 19-year-old man from Sichuan surnamed Liu was sentenced to life in prison for smuggling a load of imitation guns from a Taiwanese seller.

Liu purchased the guns on July 1, 2014 for 30,000 yuan. They were shipped to the mainland on July 15 and discovered by Quanzhou customs officials on July 22.

Police said that 21 of the 24 imitation guns can fire gas-powered projectiles. Twenty of them have the power to injure another person and are therefore classified as weapons.

(Tencent News)

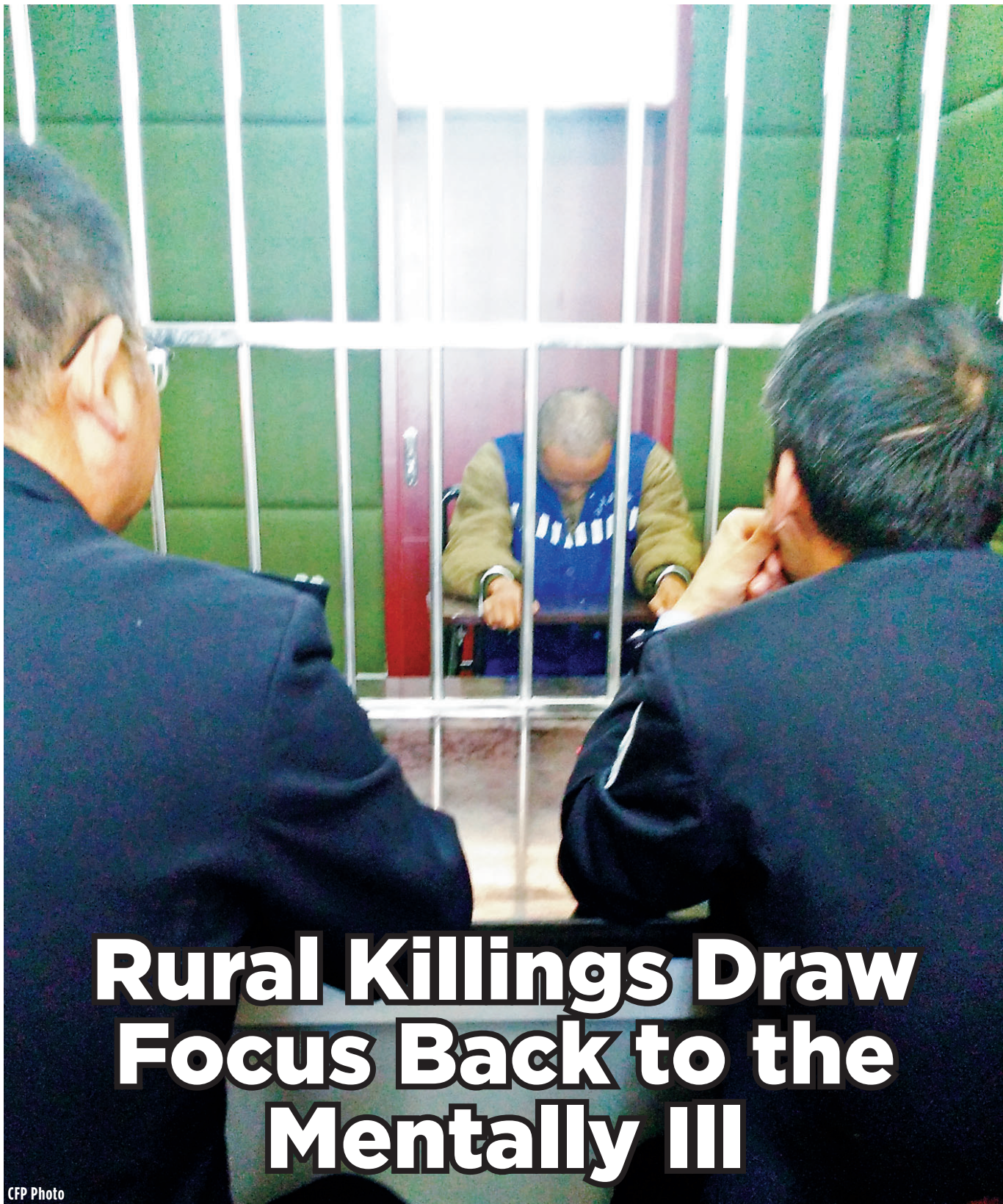
Sichuan Hospital Diagnoses Man as '3 Months Pregnant'

A Sichuan hospital has been ordered to apologize and pay 3,000 yuan to a man surnamed Liu (pseudonym) after diagnosing him as being "three months pregnant" in early May.

Liu went to Yibin 2nd People's Hospital to have his abdominal pains investigated. While there, doctors ordered a CT scan and a gastroscopy. He was released after six days and having spent 4,000 yuan. The official diagnosis was pregnancy.

The certificate required the signature of Liu's doctor, a medical team leader and a supervisor. That all three would diagnose a male patient as pregnant raises serious concerns about the quality of the hospital.

(The Paper)



CFP Photo

Rural Killings Draw Focus Back to the Mentally Ill

BY WANG YAN

A 27-year-old man who was diagnosed with schizophrenia stabbed and killed four family members on May 11 in Shijiazhuang, Hebei province. Among the slain were his 80-year-old grandmother and a 1-year-old boy.

Less than a week before the incident, 29-year-old Wang Jiaolong in Luochuan County, Shaanxi province was recorded by a security camera when he attacked a toddler on the street. A diagnosis after his arrested revealed that Wang too suffered from an untreated psychological condition.

According to *The Paper*, there were 30 violent crimes carried out by mentally ill people in rural China in 2014. But healthcare professionals say that number is severely underestimated.

Wang Fangmin, an official in Wang Jiaolong's village, told *The Paper* there were three patients who suffered from mental illness in his village. Sixiangwuxie, a Sina Weibo blogger who investigated the case, said the local government gave only 100 yuan per month in aid to the families of those people.



Photo by cnewst.com

The three were mostly taken care for by family members. The village sent people to visit on a regular basis just to see "if they are still alive and have enough to eat," Wang Fangmin said.

In rural China, avoidance is the most affordable option for public safety.

Increasing Illness Rate

A 2009 report by China's National Center

for Mental Health estimated that 100 million Chinese people suffered from mental illness and 16 million were in serious need of treatment.

Those statistics would mean that 1 in 13 Chinese people suffer from a mental disorder, and 1 in every 100 requires psychiatric treatment.

The most recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics shows that China had 4.61 million people being monitored for psychological illness – an increase of 3 percent from 2012's 4.49 million.

The link between mental illness and crime has always been debated. Most international research has shown that "the vast majority of people with mental illness are not violent," and that "the link between mental illness and violence is promoted by entertainment and news media."

A more recent study by JAMA Neurology on January 5 found that among all types of mental illness, only people with frontotemporal dementia (FTD) – neuron loss in the frontal or temporal lobes – are likely to be violent. "More than a third of people with FTD act out criminal behaviors," it

said. The condition chips away at regions of the brain that rein in impulsive behavior.

Led by Bruce Miller at the University of California, San Francisco, the study also reported violent behavior in people with Alzheimer's and Huntington's diseases; however, those patients' misconduct tended to surface later in the disease and to a lesser degree than it did in people with FTD.

But in China the numbers play out very differently due to late detection of mental illness.

Ma Mingdong, former deputy head of a mental hospital in northeastern China, studied 263 psychiatric patients in 2004. He found out that 91 percent of the patients had slain another person. The average surveyed patient killed 1.85 people: the most violent had killed 7.

'No Other Choice'

Li Pencheng, a psychologist who studied mentally ill persons in rural China, told *The Paper* that the public only noticed illness when it resulted in violent crimes. Few ever sought to solve the problem beforehand.

Li said he met with one 43-year-old mental patient in Gansu province. A lack of treatment left the man's limbs deformed and he was only able to communicate through grunts. His family leaves a bowl of food on the floor each day and he eats it in a room where he is also expected to defecate on the floor.

The man began to show symptoms of mental disorder when his 5-year-old daughter died 15 years ago, Li said. His family used to chain him up during serious flare-ups. His family said they did not want to treat him like that, but they had no other choice because they could not afford treatment.

The story is the epitome of what psychiatric patients in rural China experience. Both family members and hospital staff say there is no better choice.

The report released by China's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2012 revealed some alarming numbers. With millions of psychiatric patients in the country, China had only 230,000 beds for mental health patients.

Bai Youtao, professor at the Institute of Social Development in Nanjing Normal University told *The Paper* that, "There are not enough beds in any mental institution. One has to get out for another to go in."

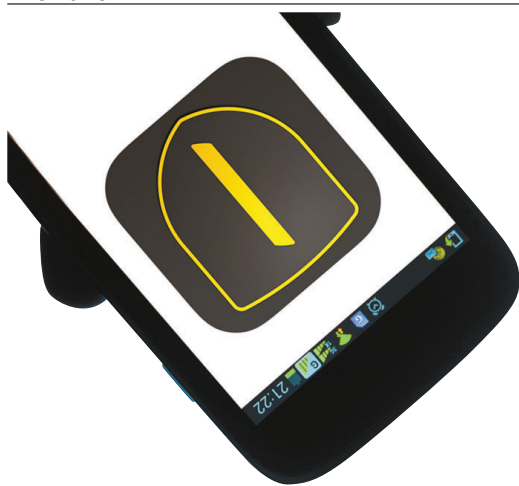
Broken System

Experts agree that poor management of psychiatric patients puts society at risk. But with family members and hospitals arguing about treatment, a more broad support mechanism appears unlikely to arrive.

After Wang Jiaolong's "vicious beating" video went viral, the Luochuan government announced that it would conduct a county-wide check of all people who have shown symptoms of mental disorder. But that approach only strengthens the public perception that people with mental disorders are violent and dangerous, experts said.

Liang Shuji, a social worker in Guangzhou, told *The Paper* that "mental disorder are not merely an illness – for patients, it is part of their lives."

"By providing community service, we need to let patients know they have the right to be respected and to make their own decisions. We need to let them know the consequences of hurting other people. The key to help them is to respect them and show genuine concerns," Liang said. ■



Uber's Chinese branch in Guangzhou made international headlines when the Industrial and Commercial Bureau and Traffic Committee teamed up with local police to raid its offices on April 30.

Police confiscated more than 1,000 iPhones, used by the company to keep Uber drivers connected to its network. Uber's "lack of registration formalities" and "organizing private cars to operate illegally" were cited as reasons for the raid.

But China's rapid technological advancement and increasing reliance on the Internet put software like Uber in high demand.

Private drivers have been encroaching on the traditional taxi market for two years. With Uber's entrance into the China market, their voice is becoming even louder.

Controversies

Based in San Francisco, Uber offers private driving services in 50 countries. The app is similar to Didi Taxi and connects passengers with private cars and carpooling services.

Within four years of its establishment, Uber grew to become one of the most valuable venture companies with an estimated value of \$50 billion.

But it has never been without controversy.

Some public statistics showed that by March, Uber had caused the business volume of traditional taxi and bus systems in the US to decline from 85 percent to 52 percent. Taxi drivers in Warsaw, London and Chicago have united to protest the app.

Furthermore, Uber has been banned in Thailand, India, Korea and France for operating a chauffeur service without a license.

While Uber lagged in the domestic market, the raids in Guangzhou and Chengdu served as much-needed free publicity. During the first week of May, downloads of the Uber app on iOS increased sharply and surpassed Didi Taxi to become one of the top-ranked travel apps, *China Business News* reported.

Strategy

Uber's late arrival to the China market in August 2013 put it in competition with well-established domestic players.

A recent report by Analysys International shows the total earnings of taxi booking apps in China reached 172 million yuan by the end of 2014.

Didi and Kuaidi shared 99.8 percent of the profits.

With income scarce, Uber was left to forge partnerships with other players. In 2014 it signed a cooperation agreement with Baidu

that brought in a \$600 million investment and access to Baidu's mobile maps and services. The insurance company China Life also invested \$200 million in Uber.

Much of that investment has gone into staggeringly high subsidies, an approach

Gov's Raid Backfires, Causes Spike in Uber Downloads

BY WANG LINGXIAO

Didi and Kuaidi used to expand their user base in 2014.

Last June, Uber slashed the price of its cars by 25 percent. A month later, in Shenzhen, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Hangzhou and Wuhan, it reduced the starting price to zero and began billing by the kilometer.

For drivers, Uber is a way to earn money part time. Uber offers a double subsidy on every fare carried between 6 and 9 a.m. The highest subsidy can reach 50 yuan.

In addition to the subsidy per order, Uber also began distributing awards depending on the driver's total fares per week. After Spring Festival, the reward was increased to 100 yuan for drivers who beat his previous week's record.

"Within two hours I can earn 170 yuan. Every night, I can deal with seven orders," said Jiang Dechang, a part-time Uber driver.

Reforming the Taxi Market

Reforms to the highly monopolized traditional taxi market have been proposed for several years, but all have died in discussion.

Platforms like Uber offer a path around the need for reforms.

"The taxi industry is not operating according to market rules. To reform the taxi system, the first step needs to be creating a fair and open market," said Jia Xijin, vice president of the faculty of public administration at Tsinghua University.

Professor Zhao Jian at Beijing Jiaotong University said that apps for booking cars should be permitted by the government under its policy of "Internet plus other industries." Rather than cracking down on innovation, the government would better off building an effective system to direct and administer new technologies. ■

(Wang Lingxiao is an intern at Beijing Today.)



Photo by CFP



Schools Award Celebrities Professor Titles, Tax Dollars

BY YANG XIN



He Jiong, one of the nation's most famous and beloved emcees, has become a hot topic on social media for a seemingly embarrassing reason: freeloading.

Formerly known as Teacher He, He Jiong graduated from Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU) in 1997 and has been ostensibly working as an instructor and lecturer of Arabic since graduation.

However, on May 13, Professor Qiao Mu accused He of abusing his staff identity to receive pay from the university even though he hasn't worked there in many years.

The *Beijing News* confirmed in a recent report that He halted all teaching activities at the beginning of 2009. "I think it's understandable that a university needs instructors and teachers as well as celebrities to enhance its reputation and attract sponsorships," said Xue Qingguo, dean of BFSU's Arabic Lan-

guage Department.

In response, He posted two short messages to Weibo on May 17, arguing that he hasn't been accepting pay from the university since 2007, when he suspended teaching in BFSU and started working full-time as an anchor of Hunan Satellite TV.

Touted Celebrities

Unlike most freeloading scandals, the majority of netizens have sided with He Jiong and believe that he has made so many contributions to the school that he deserves to keep his title.

The general public and media have been less kind.

"The university spared no effort to stop him from leaving, afraid that it might lose the abundant social resources or sponsorship opportunities He brings along," *Southern Metropolis Daily* wrote in an editorial.

While it's uncertain whether He Jiong

was coerced into keeping his title, it is certain that he occupies a seat on BFSU's staff list.

"As a public university, BFSU is funded by the national government. In other words, each staff member is paid by the taxpayers. Staff should take their responsibility accordingly," said Zhong Feixing, a commentator.

"As a key university affiliated with the Ministry of Education, BFSU's utilitarianism on this issue is pitifully demeaning," wrote Chen Guangjiang, another commentator.

BFSU is not the only school going to such lengths to woo celebrities. While foreign schools woo celebrities with the promise of honorary degrees, China is one of the few countries to grant them the status of professors.

The trend of Chinese schools employing celebrities as "guest professors" began about a decade ago. Some celebrities were actually employed as official lecturers or professors such as senior actor Huang Lei and classical singer Liu Huan. Others were appointed "professors" during their promotional visits.

In 2004, Jackie Chan was appointed by Peking University as a distinguished chair professor. The next year, film star Stephen Chow was appointed as a part-time professor at the Renmin University School of Business during the promotion of *Kung Fu Hustle*. In 2007, Ang Lee, the Academy Award winner for Best Director, was appointed by Beijing Film Academy as a guest professor while promoting the film *Lust, Caution* on campus.

More and more celebrities walk into universities as guest professors and step out as celebrities again.

Lost Universities

Not many people know about the difference among various professor titles such as guest professor, part-time professor and distinguished chair professor. Universities and celebrities might not want the inside story to be exposed either.

But for professors engaged in serious academic scholarship, the varying titles mean a lot.

"Universities represent top-level academic education. Celebrities might have skill in certain fields, but that does not make them eligible to become college professors," said Zhou Xiaozheng, a professor of sociology at Renmin University of China.

The official website of the Ministry of Education lists the specific regulations on naming honorary professors and chair professors, but that specification does not apply to part-time professors, guest professors or consulting professors.

While universities in the US employ visiting professors or part-time professors, those employees are mostly required to have real talents and at least to hold a master's degree.

Derek Bok, a former president of Harvard University, once denied Henry Kissinger's request to teach in Harvard, saying "what I want is a professor, not a big bug."

"Self-discipline is very much needed in Chinese universities' internal management. Celebrities should be awarded in consideration of their contributions to certain disciplines or public welfare programs, not the power or public influence they enjoy," said Gong Fang, head of the Department of Higher Education at Nanjing University. ■



Photos by the Israeli Embassy in China

Israeli Artist to Bring Classical Music Back to Civil Heart

BY YANG XIN

The second Beijing Musethica Week is approaching with this year's theme being elders.

As a non-profit organization that promotes an education for talented young musicians, Musethica is a new model of integrating concert playing in to the education of musicians and of bringing classical concerts out of concert halls and into society.

Specifically speaking, Musethica offers young, qualified artists the opportunity to perform concerts regularly in front of people who are excluded or at risk of exclusion. Venues include hospitals, refugee homes, homeless shelters and schools for special needs children.

From May 25 to 27, a series of charity music performances will be available among nursing homes and local primary schools. On May 28, Musethica Week's closing concert will be held in the Forbidden City Concert Hall, during which the audience is expected to enjoy the music created by classical masters such as Beethoven and Erno Dohnanyi.

Beijing Musethica Week is part of Musethica's worldwide education program. Avri Levitan, Musethica's co-founder and an Israeli violist, has been bringing classical music to hundreds of elders at nursing homes and students at primary schools since its launch last year.

"Musethica is the combination of music and ethics. It is a simple and powerful way to benefit people around the world," Levitan said. By carrying forward the program, young musicians gain on-stage experience that is crucial to their future music career while underprivileged groups get the chance to experience the beauty and power of music.

Levitan created the Musethica concept in 2009. It officially launched in 2012 in Zaragoza, under the auspices of Professor Carmen Marcuello. Musethica is now active in Berlin, Beijing, Tel Aviv and Zaragoza.

The Beijing performances are co-organized by Commonweal Musethica, the Israeli Embassy in China and Beijing Poly Theatre. ■

Forbidden City Concert Hall

⌚ 7:30 pm, May 28

📍 Xichang'an Jie, Tian'anmen, Dongcheng

💰 50-380 yuan



Avri Levitan

Finland to Open Visa Application Center

BY YANG XIN

May 25 marks the opening of the Finland Visa Application Center in downtown Beijing, according to the Embassy of Finland. The new visa application center is believed to be able to offer faster and more comprehensive visa services, as applications can be submitted by appointment and in digital or paper form.

The application center will also provide services such as visa photography, Internet access and courier delivery across China once the visa has been issued.

Finland is an increasingly attractive destination for Chinese tourists. The pure environment, unique culture, modern designs, interesting outdoor activities, Northern lights, midnight sun and other aspects of Finland are the main points of interest.

Direct flights between major Chinese cities and Helsinki and the Schengen-based visas and Euro currency make Finland more accessible to Chinese visitors than many other destinations in Europe.

Helsinki is a major transportation hub between Asia and Europe. Visitors planning to continue their trip to other Nordic countries, the Baltic States, elsewhere in Europe or to Russia have a wide transportation network either by air, land or sea.

Finland and China enjoy long-standing relations. In 2015, the two countries celebrated the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. One focus of the anniversary year is to promote people-to-people exchange. The opening of visa centers in Beijing is an important measure to promote exchange between the countries.

The Embassy of Finland has also set up another visa application center in Shanghai. Both the visa centers in Beijing and Shanghai are located in their respective downtown areas. ■

Finland Visa Center

📍 Room 1005, Hailong Oil Building, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang

Speedy Visas Heat Up Business Travel to Germany

BY YANG XIN

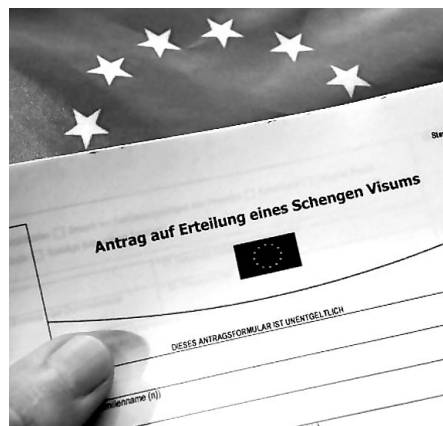


Photo by the German Embassy in Beijing

In response to Chinese business travelers' increasing demand for a streamlined visa application process, the German Embassy in Beijing has promised to speed up its visa processing to 48 hours from May.

The embassy will also issue more long-term multiple-entry Schengen visas for frequent travelers and business people. This will help facilitate frequent travel without having to apply for visas as often.

There has been an apparent increase in the amount of long-term multiple-entry visas granted to Chinese travelers. Since last October, the number has more than doubled.

For other Chinese travelers coming to Germany to visit family or take a holiday, the visa processing time has also shortened to three workdays.

The simplification of Chinese tourists' visa application is largely a result of Premier Li Keqiang's state visit to Germany last October. During the visit, both China and Germany had agreed to try to shorten the visa process, which could take at least three to five working days.

German visa sections in China rank among the largest worldwide. In 2014, Germany issued about 330,000 visas to Chinese citizens, an increase of 20 percent.

About 60 percent of visa applicants are business travelers.

Last year, the number of Chinese tourists staying in Germany overnight surpassed 2 million, a 17 percent increase year-on-year. The growth has been continuing, according to January's latest statistics. In January, Chinese people staying overnight in Germany increased 21 percent, making China a Top 10 contributor to the German tourism market.

According to the German National Tourism Board, the number of Chinese citizens staying in Germany overnight is expected to reach 3.2 million by 2030. ■



Shunxin Youth Camp Offers Green Holiday Experience

Shunxin Youth Camp International is the fifth branch of Beijing Youth Camp International (BYCI). It is located in the Shunxin Green Holiday Village in Lisui County, Shunyi district.

The sprawling holiday village has spacious forest and water resources along its Chaobai River location. Its scenic grounds make Shunxin Green Holiday Village "the biggest ecological scenic spot for meadows and forests in Beijing."

Unlike many holiday villages with beautiful scenery and poor transportation, Shunxin Green Holiday Village can be accessed by the Jingshun Road, Jingtong Expressway, Shunping Road and Shunchang Road. It is only 35 kilometers from the city's urban district and 13 kilometers away from Beijing Capital International Airport.

Camp Activities

A natural oxygen belt in the holiday village keeps youths away from urban haze and automobile exhaust. It offers Chinese youth a rare chance to experience actual green life and outdoor activity.

Shunxin Youth Camp International provides both physical training and intellectual exercise. It has four kinds of courses geared to team development, outdoor activity, survival and cultural experience.

The camp aims at helping youth build confidence, cultivate an independent character and improve their social skills.

On May 4, Xu Xiao, secretary of Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL) Central Committee, Guo Wenjie, deputy secretary of CCYL Beijing Committee, and other Chinese officials met with hundreds of middle and high school students to present bouquets at the Shunxin Hero Monument.

On that day, Shunyi district youth volunteered to water and plant trees. Visitors stopped through the themed classrooms of Shunxin Youth Camp International for activities in Traditional Culture Education and Military Education.

Introduction to BYCI

More than 30,000 youths have trained at BYCI since it

began operating in July 2012.

As a platform for fostering relations between youths from urban and rural areas and abroad, BYCI tries its best to fulfill the task of promoting Chinese youth development.

BYCI's activities include culture and exchange programs, education and training programs, outdoor sports programs, internship programs and some featured programs.

Youths from China and all over the world can learn about different cultures through diverse communication and cooperation activities.

BYCI is supported by the Beijing Municipal Government, the Communist Youth League Beijing Committee (CYLB) and the Beijing Youth Daily Group (BYDG).

The camp includes six locations in the districts of Chaoyang, Shunyi, Daxing and Fangshan. ■

(By Shu Pengqian)

